

# COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

For Immediate Release  
March 28, 2006

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### **Davis Seeks Better Information Sharing In Wake of Disasters**

*Following Up on Katrina Report, Government Reform  
To Examine Barriers to Information Sharing*

**What:** Government Reform Committee Oversight Hearing,  
“The Need to Know: Information Sharing Lessons for Disaster  
Response”

**When:** THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2006, 10:00 A.M.  
(Hearing follows brief business meeting)

**Where:** ROOM 2154, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

**Background:** As chairman of the House Select Bipartisan Committee that investigated Hurricane Katrina, Chairman Davis led a six-month inquiry into how federal, state and local governments prepared and responded (or failed to adequately prepare or respond) to what proved to be the most expensive natural disaster in American history.

One of the themes that emerged from the Select Committee’s final report, “A Failure of Initiative,” was a lack of information sharing and situational awareness at all levels of government.

The Select Committee report contained numerous findings highlighting the importance of information sharing in the context of disaster response. For example: 1) the lack of communication and situational awareness paralyzed command and control; 2) The Defense Department, Homeland Security, and the states had difficulty coordinating with each other, which slowed the response; and 3) Defense lacked an information sharing protocol that would have enhanced joint situational awareness and communication between all military components.

On Thursday, Davis's Government Reform Committee will begin its post-Katrina work by looking at the barriers to information sharing during and after disasters. With just two months remaining before the start of the next hurricane season, this hearing will examine how lessons learned from information sharing among law enforcement, counter-terrorism, and defense can be applied to disaster response.

The Committee is particularly interested in the methods, policies, principles and techniques found to be effective in encouraging and enhancing information sharing among diverse entities. Given the lessons learned from Katrina, federal, state, and local emergency managers and officials are obligated to the American people to produce a more nimble, effective and robust response to predictable natural disasters. How can we avoid the inadequate information sharing and murky situational awareness that characterized the governmental response to Katrina? Are impediments to more effective information sharing primarily technological, or structural, cultural, and bureaucratic in nature?

Just as the 9/11 Commission report spurred reform that addressed the need for federal counter-terrorism agencies to better share information – trying to move the government from a “need to know” to a “need to share” culture – the Committee hopes the Katrina disaster can have a similar impact on future disaster responses.

#### **Witnesses:**

##### Panel I

Peter F. Verga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Defense),  
U.S. Department of Defense  
Dr. Linton Wells II, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Networks and  
Information Integration), U.S. Department of Defense  
Vance Hitch, Chief Information Officer, U.S. Department of Justice

##### Panel II

John Brennan, President and CEO, The Analysis Corporation (former director of the  
CIA's National Counterterrorism Center)  
Dr. Donald F. Kettl, Director, Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania  
Dr. Brian A. Jackson, Physical Scientist, RAND Corporation

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